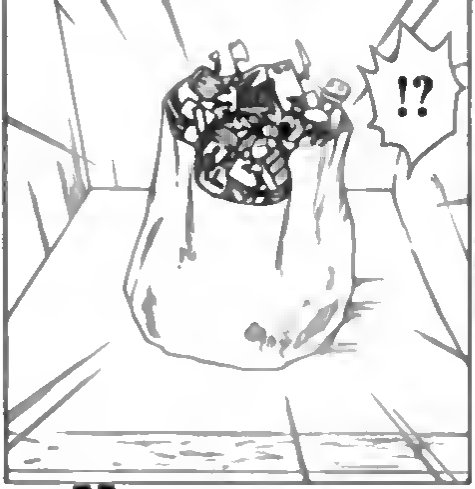
CHAPTER 5: KUROHAMI.

A RARE PEACEFUL MORNING VISIT?
OH DRAT, I OVERSLEPT A BIT.
FYAAH?

HYAAH!
!?
WHAT'RE YOU UP TO?
KIRISA!!!
EH?
UP UNTIL YESTERDAY I HAD MY COLLECTION ARRANGED PERFECTLY. THEN THIS MORNING WHEN I GOT UP MY FIGURINES WERE GONE
IT WAS YOU WHO DID IT!!
HEY NOW
WHAT ARE YOU DOING DICKHEAD, COMING INTO OTHER PEOPLES ROOMS UNANNOUNCED?!
THATS MY LINE, DUMBASS! AND WHERE HAVE MY FIGURINES GONE!


!?

WHERE HAVE YOU HIDDEN THEM? HERE?
HOLD ON HOLD ON! JUST GET OUT FOR THE TIME BEING

DON'T JOKE AROUND! HOW DARE YOU STEAL SOMEONES PRECIOUS ITEMS!
BAH

I CAN EXPLAIN, SO JUST GET OUT OF HERE FIRST!
SO YOU ARE THE CRIMINAL!

SORRY TO INTRU--DE YOU HAVE A MESSAGE KIRISA-SAN
KUNUGI-SAN WANTS TO URGENTLY

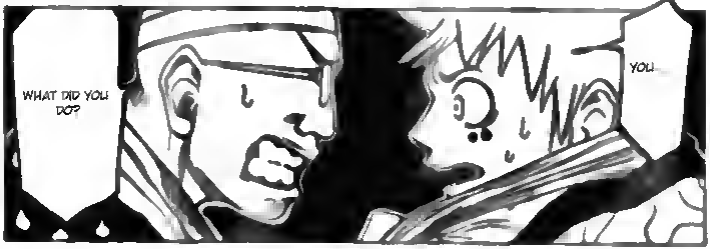
AND IF YOU HAD ANY COMMON SENSE, WHAT WOULD YOU DO WHEN I WAS CHANGING?
GET OUT
I TOLD YOU TO GET OUT, DIDN'T I? I CONFISCATED YOUR FIGURINES BECAUSE WHILE STILL OWING ME 5 RYOU YOU WERE STILL LOOKING TO BUY MORE OF THOSE FIGURINES.
YES I UNDER-STAND

!?
P. PLEASE EXCUSE ME
EH?!!-- NO.
YOU'RE MISTAKEN
THIS IS,
LISTEN!!! I'M KILLING HIBIKI!
EH?!! YOU'RE KILLING ME?!!
IT'S FINE ANYWAYS KUNIGI-SAN HAS CALLED FOR YOU SO I APOLOGIZE FOR INTERRUPTING YOU
IT'S HIBIKI'S PUNISHMENT
NO!!! YOU'RE WRONG!
I'M SORRY... I DIDN'T... KNOW YOU HAD THAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP

KUNUGI... WE'VE COME...

DOWAH!!!

GAH
WHAT IF YOU NEED US


WHAT DID YOU DO?
YOU...

!
KUMO VILLAGE BRANCHES HIGHEST OFFICIAL GARON-SAMA.
ONE OF THE TOP THREE EVEN IN THE ISHI-REN IS CALLING US.

YOU'VE BEEN CALLED BY BRANCH CHIEF GARON-SAMA.
...EH?...

GARON-SAMA'S ROOM IS ON THE HIGHEST FLOOR
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE, BUT YOU'D BETTER GO UP AND DEAL WITH IT CAREFULLY
.....
HEAD UP FROM THERE
NO...
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT WHY WE WERE CALLED?
...NO...
.....
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
.....!
WHAT ABOUT YOU HIBIKI?
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN HIGHER THAN THE 10TH FLOOR

LEVEL 5 KIRI-ISHI
KIRI-ISHI REN KUMO VILLAGE BRANCH CHIEF
NAME. GARON

LEVEL 1
KIRI-ISHI KIRISA AND HIBIKI HAVE ARRIVED

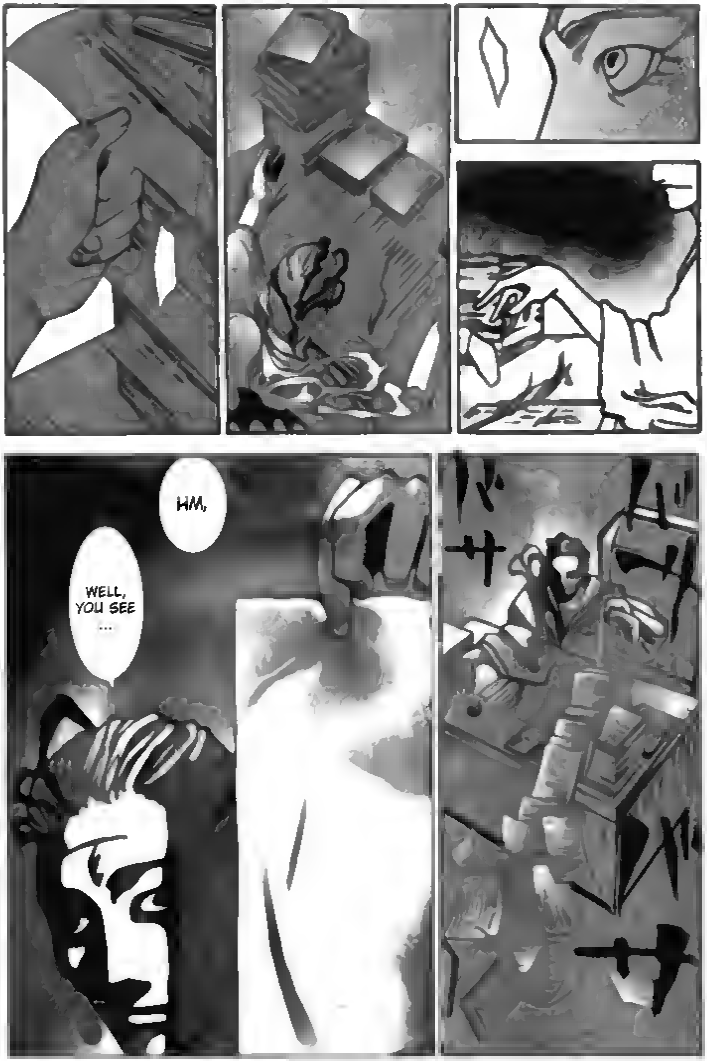
DID THE BRANCH CHIEF WIELD THAT THING?

WHAT A HUGE CRAVE....

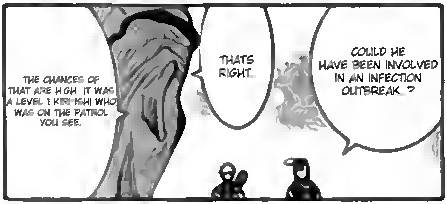
!
AH, YES!
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US.

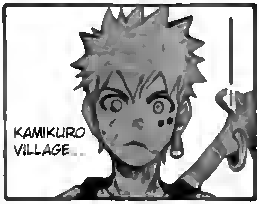
COME A BIT CLOSER.

EH
YOU'RE THE SAME AS EVER, HIBIKI.
DICKHEAD! WATCH YOUR MOUTH!
.....
I HAVEN'T SAID A WORD TO ANYONE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED 5 YEARS AGO.
DON'T LOOK SO ANGRY 5 YEARS HAVEN'T CHANGED YOUR APPEAREANCE.
WHAT'S THE JOB?
WHAT? THEN HIBIKI AND THE BRANCH CHIEF HAVE MET BEFORE?
HIBIKI'S NEVER SAID A WORD ABOUT THAT.
.....
I JUST WANT TO HAVE A NICE TALK WITH YOU.

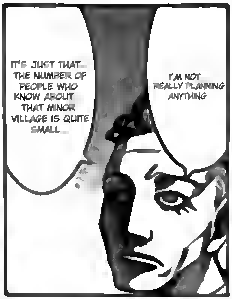

HM,
WELL, YOU SEE ...

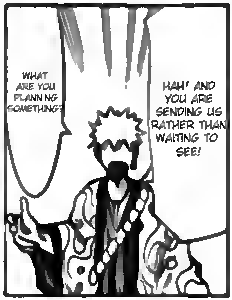
THE KIRI-ISHI WHO WAS PATROLLING AROUND KAMIKURO VILLAGE STILL HASN'T RETURNED.


THE CHANCES OF THAT ARE HIGH. IT WAS A LEVEL 1 KIRI-ISHI WHO WAS ON THE PATROL, YOU SEE.
THAT'S RIGHT.
COULD HE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN AN INFECTION OUTBREAK...?


KAMIKURO VILLAGE...

IF SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED I THOUGHT THAT IF I SENT YOU THEN YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO RESOLVE IT.


IT'S JUST THAT... THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW ABOUT THAT MINOR VILLAGE IS QUITE SMALL...
I'M NOT REALLY THINKING ANYTHING


WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING SOMETHING?
HAH! AND YOU ARE SENDING US RATHER THAN WAITING TO SEE!

I HAVE HIGH HOPES FOR YOU HIKKI
WE HAVE TO GO AND SEE RIGHT?!? LET'S GO MIRAI
IT WAS KAMIKIRI VILLAGE THEN.
H, HEY
...
FOR YOU ARE A "STRONG PERSON" YOU SEE.

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HIBIKI
HEY, WAIT UP!
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN IN THE PAST?
HEY!!
I NEVER KNEW THAT YOU HAD MET WITH GARON-SAMA.
WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DID YOU HAVE?

NOTHING HAPPENED.
HIIKI, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
IT'S ALRIGHT. IT'S THIS WAY
FOLLOW ME.

ビュオオオオ

!
THIS IS KAMIKURO VILLAGE

OF COURSE
YOU KNOW THIS PLACE PRETTY WELL

THERE WAS A VILLAGE IN THIS SPOT...
!!

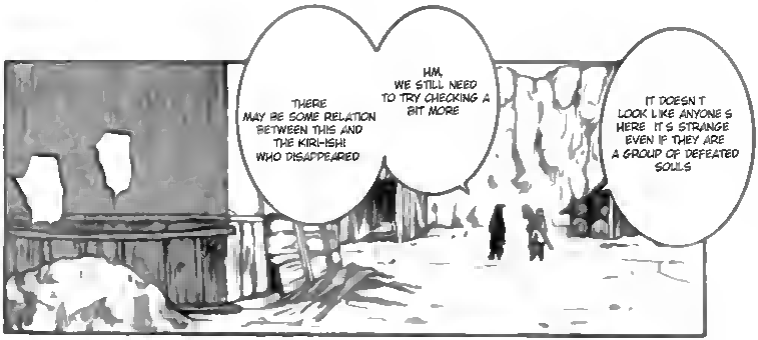
I LIVED IN THIS HOUSE UP UNTIL 5 YEARS AGO.
WHEN I WAS A KID, I HAD LOST MY PARENTS I, WAS IN A HELL OF LONELINESS WAS PICKED UP AND TRAINED BY A FORMER KIRI-ISHI WHO HAD RETIRED.
SHOW ME SOME GUTS!
FORMER KIRI-ISHI
NAME: SETSU
YOU WERE THE ONE WHO CAME TO ME ASKING TO BE TRAINED!
COME ON, COME ON GET UP HIBIKI!
HIBIKI- 7 YEARS OLD

THERE, NOW YOU'RE DRIVEN IN A CORNER... WE CAN AWAKEN YOUR DORMANT POWER..
HE WAS AN UNBELIEVABLE OLD MAN... I WAS TRAINED IN A WAY LIKE A SUPERHERO COMIC
THIS IS SERIOUSLY USELESS! AT LEAST GIVE ME A WEAPON!
THIS IS HOW THEY DO IT IN THE WILD
HE LEFT ME, IN THE MOUNTAINS IN WINTER WHILE HE WAS READING A NATURE BOOK
WAIT UP, DAMMIT!
RAISE YOUR HEAD HIGHER! YOU DON'T GET ANY FOOD UNTIL YOU CAN DO IT!
HE MADE THINGS THAT HE CALLED TRAINING BUT I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY.

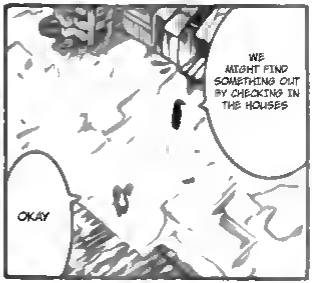
WE'RE STILL TRAINING TOMORROW!
I WON'T FORGIVE YOU IF YOU REST FOR A FEVER.
GEEZ... CAN'T EVEN GET RID OF A FEVER THIS BAD. HOPELESS.
BUT...
GRAMPS.
SORRY.
THANKS.
HMPH.
ACHCHCHCHCH NO--O NO--O
YOUR GRUEL IS READY TO EAT!
WE'RE WORKING HARD TOMORROW!

I won't get those sort of days back again.
Ah..... .... he died 5 years ago.
It looks like the house is empty, so is that old man.....
This is what you would call a group of defeated souls
It's a village where hermits and recluses relaxedly live and then aimlessly disappear
I had some affection but I didn't have a single friend...
so I didn't have any regret when I left.

THIS VILLAGE...
...BUT IT'S WEIRD
THERE'S NO SIGN OF HUMAN LIFE.
THERE
THERE
THERE
THERE
O--Y!
IS ANYONE THERE?!!


IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYONE'S HERE. IT'S STRANGE EVEN IF THEY ARE A GROUP OF DEFEATED SOULS
HM. WE STILL NEED TO TRY CHECKING A BIT MORE
THERE MAY BE SOME RELATION BETWEEN THIS AND THE KIRISHI WHO DISAPPEARED

THE WATER IS STILL NEW. THERE WAS DEFINITELY SOMEONE LIVING HERE UNTIL A SHORT WHILE AGO.


WE MIGHT FIND SOMETHING OUT BY CHECKING IN THE HOUSES
OKAY

!?
HO

THE PROBLEM IS WHY THEY'VE DISAPPEARED...
IF AKATSUKI IS INVOLVED THEN...

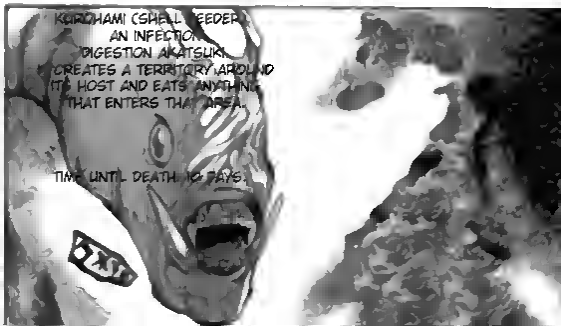
AN ARM!
BLOOD?
WHAT IS THIS?!
THIS OPENING IS...
!!?
IT COULDN'T BE...
CRAVE...

OUUH

うわああ
HIBIKI!
GWAAH!

HAH.
HAH.

WHAT IS THIS THING!!
SHIT!


KUROHAMI (SHELL FEEDER) AN INFECTION DIGESTION AKATSUKI CREATES A TERRITORY/AROUND ITS HOST AND EATS ANYTHING THAT ENTERS THAT AREA.
TIME UNTIL DEATH: 10 DAYS.
EXIT

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ウオオオ!!!
AN AKATSUKI WHO MOVES THROUGH THE GROUND?
WAS THE KIRI-ISHI WHO PATROLLED THIS AREA KILLED BY THIS THING?
WHERE IS IT?

!?
KIRISA!

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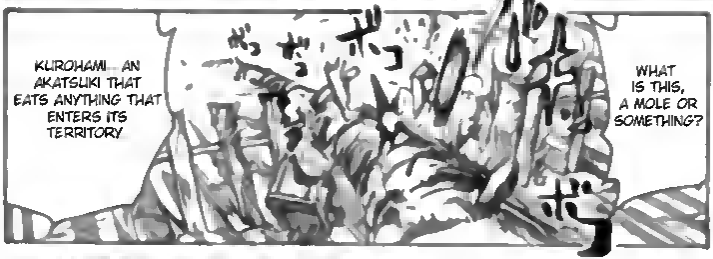
!?
TCH.

ARE YOU ALRIGHT HIBIKI?
I LET MY GUARD DOWN. IT ATTACKED MY LEFT ARM,
IT'S ONLY A SMALL WOUND THOUGH


KUROHAMI... AN AKATSUKI THAT EATS ANYTHING THAT ENTERS ITS TERRITORY
WHAT IS THIS, A MOLE OR SOMETHING?

I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY ARE! WE NEED TO FIND THEM TO DESTROY THE AKATSUKI!!
WHERE'S THE PATIENT?

!?
TCH, IT'S HIDING.
KEEP YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU! IT MIGHT COME OUT OF ANYWHERE!
MOST LIKELY...
THIS ENTIRE VILLAGE IS ITS TERRITORY.

HIBIKI!!!

DAMN!!
GHEH.
GUAAAH!!

EH?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?!!
TCH IT'S A TROUBLESOME AKATSUKI IT HIDES UNDERGROUND AND DOESN'T SHOW A HAND OR FOOT
THERE'S A SIMPLE SOLUTION.
!?
I JUST HAVE TO NOT LET IT HIDE.
UWAH!!!

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ハッ
...OUCH
QUITE FINE, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.
SEAL!
VIAL!

IT DIDN'T SEAL INTO THE VIAL. IT DISAPPEARED.
HUH? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
.....?
IT'S WEIRD. THE VIAL IS A ITEM THAT SHOULD SUCK IN ALL OF THE AKATSUKI THAT HAS BEEN DESTROYED
IT SHOULD HAVE WORKED PROPERLY.
IS SOMETHING LIKE THAT MEANT TO HAPPEN?
NO

WELL. IT'S NOT THAT BIG OF A PROBLEM.
MORE IMPORTANTLY, FINDING THE PATIENT TAKES PRIORITY
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
...BUT EVEN SO. THE JOB THIS TIME WAS ESPECIALLY STRANGE...
WHY DID HE SEND US OUT
WHAT THE?
IS THIS AN EARTHQUAKE?
!?
!!?

KI...
WH... AT?
GRAB ON!
KUH!!
KIRISA!

--CH.
GAH!

THAT MONSTER JUST NOW..
WHAT WAS THAT?
KIRISA!!
SHIT!
GOGOGOGO
KIRISA!!
ZA
KIRISA!!!
KIRISA VANISHED!!! AND WHAT OTHER SECRETS IS THIS VILLAGE HIDING?